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LOS ANGELES TIMES
14 OCTOBER 1981

Jury Selection Begins in Trial of Alleged Polish Spy

By CHARLES MAHER, Times Staff Writer

Only one defendant remained—the other having pleaded guilty—as jury selection began here Tuesday in an espionage trial involving alleged transmission of secret U.S. defense information to Polish government agents.

It could be a day or two before a jury is impaneled to hear the case at the Los Angeles federal courthouse. Marian W. Zacharski, 29, suspected by U.S. authorities of being a Polish intelligence officer, is accused of conspiring with former Hughes Aircraft engineer William Holden Bell to pass "sensitive documents" to Polish agents.

Bell, 61, entered a guilty plea here Friday to one count of transmitting secret defense information to representatives of the Polish People's Republic in Geneva last April 22. The FBI said he had signed a statement "admitting complicity in the theft of classified documents" from Hughes Aircraft and in their delivery to Zacharski, a Polish national. Bell is expected to be the prosecution's key witness at the trial, which could last about a month.

An FBI agent said in an affidavit that Bell told him he was in financial trouble and compromised his

position at Hughes when offered money by Zacharski for classified information. The two men lived at the same apartment building in Playa del Rey.

Zacharski was president of the Polish American Machinery Co., a firm owned by the government of Poland, but was suspended by the company after his indictment.

Sought to Delay Trial

His attorney, Edward M. Stadum of San Francisco, sought unsuccessfully to have the trial delayed. Stadum said Tuesday that U.S. District Court Judge David V. Kenyon held several in-chambers hearings at which only the government was represented.

Stadum said that during the sessions, the judge and a government lawyer discussed a number of documents the defense has not seen. He said he has asked the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals to look into these proceedings and determine whether the defense should be given access to the documents. Stadum said he does not know what the documents are, but wants to ascertain whether they would be useful in his case.

The offense of which Zacharski is accused is punishable by a maximum penalty of life in prison.

Bell pleaded guilty to giving Polish agents a copy of a document called "Dual Purpose Weapon System (DPWS) Study Effort Final Report." It was dated September, 1979, and stamped "Secret." Bell's maximum penalty would be a 10-year prison term and a \$10,000 fine.